

DETAILED ACTION

This office action is in response to applicant's Arguments and remarks filed August 01, 2011.

Response to Arguments

1. The Rejection under 35 USC 103(e) with respect to claims 1, 2, 5-11, is withdrawn based on Examiner's Amendment and the Applicant's argument with respect to rejected claim 1 and 12

Examiner's Amendment

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with William Valance, Reg. No. 28275 on October 20, 2011. The applicant representative, William Valance agreed to the following changes without prejudice.

The amendment as the following:

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Claim 12. (new) A discussion unit (10) for use in a conference system and adapted for connection to at least one second discussion unit (10), the discussion unit (10) comprising an essentially closed casing (410) having a base (414), a first section (452), a second section (454), a narrow circumferentially closed edge (424) **completely** surrounding the closed casing (410) and an exchangeable portion (420) consisting of a hollow only circumferentially closed rim (422) that is removably mounted to the closed casing (410) so as to cover only the narrow circumferentially closed edge (424) of the closed casing (410) using an interconnection (426), wherein the first section (452) and the second section (454) are adapted to be attached to each other in an arrangement that renders the interconnection (426) inaccessible from outside of the casing (410).

Allowable Subject Matter

2. Claims 1-2, and 5-12 are allowed.

Reasons for Allowance

The following is an examiner's statement of reason for allowance:

The prior art specifically **Maatta et al (US Patent No.: 5,768,370 B1; hereinafter Maatta)** in view of **Hargis David (Patent No.: WO 0205610; hereinafter David, IDS filed on August 30, 2006)** failed to render obviousness in combination or individually, and failed to anticipate individually the following limitations:

“an essentially closed casing (410) having a base (414) and an additional narrow circumferentially closed edge (424) completely surrounding the closed casing and at least one exchangeable portion (420) consisting of a hollow only circumferentially closed rim (422) that is removably mounted to the closed casing (410) so as to cover only the narrow circumferentially closed edge (424) of the closed casing (410)” as disclosed in independent claims 1 and 12.

Moreover, “Maatta discloses a telephone [20] with a housing base [22]. A cover [28] is removably attached to the housing base [22]. The cover [28] includes an outer face [30], the outer face [30] including an outer face cover [102]. The cover [28] further includes a rim [100] generally congruent with a peripheral flange [90] of fixing collar [60], which fixing collar [60] is removably attachable to the cover [28]. The rim [100] is upstanding from the outer cover face [102]. Maatta's outer cover face [102] of cover [28] **is not equivalent** to a base (414) as claimed. Applicants' base (414) comprises the entire closed casing (410), i.e., surrounding the closed casing (410). Maatta's outer cover face [102] and cover [28] comprise only one portion of housing base [22] (upon which is attached fixing collar [60]).

In order to better highlight this feature that distinguishes the invention from Maatta, however, applicants hereby amend independent claim 1 to qualify that the narrow circumferentially closed edge (424) completely surrounds the closed casing (410). Maatta's rim [100] surrounds or embodies a peripheral edge of outer cover face [102] of cover [28], but is not a narrow circumferentially closed edge of the outer closed casing [outer face 30], i.e., completely surrounding the closed casing.” “While David's panel 110 certainly has a side edge (see Fig. 2), and a beveled edge 120 set in from the sides edge (see Fig. 1), none of David's aforementioned features qualify panel 110 as an exchangeable portion **consisting of a hollow only circumferentially closed rim**.” Please see Applicant's argument with respect to rejected claim 1 and 12. As a result, **Maatta** and **David** failed to render obviousness in combination or individually,

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and failed to anticipate individually claims 1 and 12. For all the above reasons, **independent claims 1 and 12 are allowed**. Claim **2, and 5-11** are depended of independent **claim1**; therefore, claims **2, and 5-11** are allowed for their dependency from independent claim 1.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled “Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance”.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Amal Zenati whose telephone number is 571-270-1947. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:00am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner’s supervisor, Curtis Kuntz can be reached on 571- 272- 7499. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571- 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Amal Zenati/
Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2614

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October 20, 2011

/CURTIS KUNTZ/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2614